REMARKS

Applicants have carefully considered the Examiner's comments from the office action mailed April 7, 2006. Claims 12-17, and 25 remain pending in the application. Editorial revisions have been made to claim 17 to correct a formal matter per the Examiner's request. No new matter has been added. New claims 26-33 have been added based on claims 13-17 and 25. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 12-17, and 25-33.

Claim Rejections

Claim 17 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicants assert appropriate correction has been made and the rejection is overcome. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claims 12-14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,824,383 to Lemke. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 12 recites, in part, a connection strip including a plastic housing and insulation-piercing terminal contact elements arranged in the plastic housing. Shielding plates are arranged between the insulation-piercing terminal contact elements. At least one base rail is integrally formed with the shielding plates from a metal sheet. Each shielding plate is connected to the base rail via a web and is arranged rotated approximately 90° with respect to said base rail.

In contrast, Lemke discloses a plug terminator including a base plate 24 and multiple walls 32 intersecting the base plate 24 at right angles. See Figure 7. Lemke fails to disclose or suggest a base rail and shielding plate members integrally formed from a metal sheet. Rather, Lemke discloses forming the baseplate 24 from a sheet with slots at the forward end. The walls 32 are formed and slotted separately from the baseplate 24 and then joined together. Furthermore, the arrangement shown in Figure 7 cannot be integrally formed from a metal *sheet*.

For at least these reasons, Lemke does not anticipate or suggest claim 12. Claims 13 and 14 depend from claim 12 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Applicants assert the rejection is overcome and request withdrawal of the rejection. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 12-14 is requested.

Claims 12, 15-17, and 25 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,460,533 to Broeksteeg et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Broeksteeg fails to disclose or suggest insulation-piercing terminal contact elements arranged within a plastic housing. Such contact elements are illustrated in Figures 6 and 7 of the specification. Applicants assert a person skilled in the art would understand the term "insulation-piercing contact elements" to refer to contact elements that displace (e.g., pierce) the insulation on any wire lain across the contact elements. In contrast, Broeksteeg discloses a contact configured to couple to contact a mating pin, such as pin 14 of Figure 1. The receptacle portion 214 of the contact 210 could not cut through insulation on a wire pressed into the contact 210. Furthermore, Broeksteeg provides no motivation to provide an insulation-piercing contact. The mating pins 14 designed to couple to the contacts 210 have no insulation to pierce.

Broeksteeg also fails to disclose or suggest shielding **plates** arranged between the insulation-piercing terminal contact elements. Rather, a single integral contact portion 182 extends between receptacle portions 214 of passageways 134b and 134d. The arrangement of multiple shielding plates between insulation-piercing contact terminals is not disclosed.

For at least these reasons, Broeksteeg would not lead a person having skill in the art to the invention of claim 12. Applicants assert the rejection is overcome and request withdrawal of the rejection. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 12 is requested.

Claims 15-17, and 25 depend from claim 12 are allowable over Broeksteeg for at least the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 12. In addition, Broeksteeg fails to disclose or suggest the shielding plates being substantially flat as recited in claim 15. Broeksteeg also does not disclose or suggest a web having a narrower width than the shielding plates as recited in claim 16. With respect to claim 25, Broeksteeg fails to disclose or suggest the shielding plates extending from the base rail to the middle of the housing. Rather, Broeksteeg discloses a contact 214 on a front of the terminator plug, a base plate extending from the rear of the plug, and shield plates extending from the base plate towards the front of the plug adjacent the contact 214.

For at least these reasons, Broeksteeg would not lead a person having skill in the art to the invention of claims 15-17, or 25. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 15-17, and 25-33 is requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: July 7, 2006

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